UNITY

FREEDOM, FELLOWSHIP AND CHARACTER IN RELIGION

(Jenkin Lloyd Jones, Editor, 1880-1918)

John Haynes Holmes, *Editor in Chief*

Associate Editors

Francis Neilson | Louis L. Mann | Curtis W. Reese

An Outline for a New College

(*Conclusion*)

By CLARENCE R. SKINNER

The Neighborhood School

By C. F. ANSLEY

The Story of My Experiments with Truth

PART V—CHAPTERS VI and VII

By M. K. GANDHI

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UNITY

"HE HATH MADE OF ONE ALL NATIONS OF MEN"

VOLUME CII MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1928 NUMBER 9

JESUS AND EMERSON

"Were I to name that seer who is most like the Master in his vision . . ., however different in respect of temperament, environment, and much besides, I should name Emerson. No man that has spoken out since Jesus, has gazed so directly, so steadily, so calmly into the Face of the Eternal; and no man that has spoken out since Jesus, has mastered so completely the laws of spiritual being. The 'Divinity School Address' has passages almost as wonderful as the Sermon on the Mount, and there, above all the writings of men, it seems to me, is something like just interpretation of the thought of Jesus."

—William Ellery Leonard, in "The Poet of Galilee."

Well, the tumult and the shouting are over. Mountains have quaked, seas run blood, the heavens all but fallen. Vast crowds have rung the welkin, floods of dollars lubricated machinery and open palms, straw votes ridden every wind. And the result is what it is —Hoover (or Smith) the next president of the United States! This excites us about as much as the statement that tomorrow will be Monday, or Tuesday, or Friday, whatever the case may be. Nay, it excites us not half as much, for Monday, Tuesday, perhaps Friday, may bring a change in life, reveal something new or strange, vouchsafe some happiness long desired and prayed for. There is an element of the uncertain or the unexpected in another day—but not in another president of the United States. Things are going right on just as they have been going on for years. The tariff will go up a few more notches; the income taxes will grab all surplus change to pay the bills of waste and theft; the navy will demand new ships, and get more than it deserves; big business, having invested liberally in candidates, will receive its generous return in special privileges and favors; three per cent of the population will continue to own sixty odd per cent of the nation's wealth; unemployment will mock the glitter of "prosperity;" and farmers' relief be postponed till next session. And this is what we have been so excited about since last June! This is what has kept us hanging to radios, and burying our noses in morning and evening papers, and quarreling with our kinsmen and neighbors! A seamstress sewing hypothetical buttons on a postulated shirt with supposititious thread fastened to an imaginary needle is doing a real and important piece of work as compared with the millions of men and women who have been running circles in this campaign under the illusion that something was happening. A few hundred thousand individuals have the comfort of knowing that they accomplished a result that matters. We refer to the clear-headed liberals and radicals who carried Norman Thomas to an expression of intelligent moral protest. As for the other millions of our fellow-citizens—well, they see Hoover (or Smith) up and Smith (or Hoover) down, with a Republican (or Democratic) administration in office.—[NOTE: This editorial was written on October 30th, with interchangeable names provided.]

It is high time for the administration to make up its mind whether it is going to support the Briand-Kellogg Treaty, or the big naval program. It seems to think it can do both. Thus, President Coolidge said last summer, after the signing of the Pact at Paris, that this event didn't affect in any way our policy of preparedness. Secretary of War Davis, in his speech at the American Legion convention at San Antonio, declared that "the administration does not contemplate any weakening of the national defense, because of the recently signed Kellogg treaties." This is riding two horses with a vengeance. But what an acrobat accomplishes in a circus-ring cannot be accomplished by statesmen in the field of public policy. Either the administration believes in the Peace Pact, or it does not. If it does not, why did Secretary Kellogg go to Paris and, amid elaborate ceremonies, sign a document which means nothing? If it does believe in this document, why should it not testify to its belief, and therewith lay firm and deep the foundations of its fulfilment by halting at once the increase of armaments on land and sea? We are the one nation among all the signatories of the Pact which can give this evidence of sincerity and faith most safely. Recall Mr. Hughes's remark that "in no other power, or any possible combination of powers, lies any menace to our security!" Since we are the one nation which can do this most safely, we are therefore the one nation which should do it most promptly. In our case, there can be no hesitation, no compromise. This does not mean that we must forthwith strip ourselves naked—disband every regiment, sink every ship! But it does mean that we shall stop any increase of our armed forces, and lead the world in initiating and sustaining a policy of co-operative and progressive disarmament. For the administration to support in the Senate at one and the same time the Naval Bill and the Kellogg Treaty will give sustenance to every militarist, and make ourselves "a

by-word and a hissing" among all peoples. Put the Naval Bill aside, and ratify the Pact!

"Banquo's Ghost," the New York *World* calls it, referring to the Sacco-Vanzetti case. It is walking again, just now in triply terrifying form. First, a play on the subject, called "Gods of the Lightning," has been produced in New York. On the opening night an excited audience stood shouting and applauding for fifteen minutes after the drop of the last curtain; and now day after day it is moving hundreds of men and women to frenzied response. Secondly, Upton Sinclair has published his feverishly awaited novel, "Boston." It is a two-volume work and is this author's masterpiece. Into an exhaustive statement of the whole Sacco-Vanzetti drama he has woven threads of artistic fiction, and made of the whole a work of epic proportions. We imagine that this play will not be presented nor this novel sold in the Hub! Lastly, there came at just this same moment the dramatic disclosures published in the *Outlook,* which are described as relieving Vanzetti of all responsibility for the Bridgewater murder which preceded the Braintree murder, and became so hopelessly and ironically intertwined with its later developments. We have not yet examined the *Outlook* material and therefore can pass no judgment upon it. But we know that it includes affidavits from men who confess to the crime in question, which convince the *Outlook* editors that Vanzetti was wrongly convicted. For the moment we are not interested in what "Banquo's Ghost" may prove, but only in the fact that the "Ghost" is walking—walking—walking! This case will not down. Sacco and Vanzetti cannot be kept in their graves. Both of them are more alive today than when they lingered helpless behind those prison bars. We do not envy the men, however sincere they may have been, who put these two Italian anarchists to death.

How many of us really know the world we are living in? Or at least the world that some of our brethren are living in? Take the Jews, for example! In one single issue of the *Jewish Daily Bulletin,* which comes regularly a welcome visitor to our desk, we have read the following items:

New Anti-Jewish Attacks
Perpetuated in Lithuania
and Czecho-Slovakia

Warsaw Refuses Permit to
Build Synagogue

Posen Jews Return to Town,
Find Synagogue Sold

Black Hand Plunders
Transylvania Synagogues

Call Mass Meeting Against
Jewish Cemetery Desecrations

All these are items gathered in a single glance at a single issue of a daily four-page paper. They come from different countries—Lithuania, Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, Roumania, Germany. Yet all these countries are located in cultured Europe, and all claim to be devoted to the Christian faith. What a commentary on culture, and on Christianity! Our Jewish brethren are still living in a hostile world. They are still subject to incredible insults, injuries, sufferings, and persecutions. And still, as the price of life, they manifest that patience, dignity, and silent heroism which have glorified them through all the centuries as the noblest of mankind. To be a Christian, or born a Christian, in the face of such spectacle as this, is to be overwhelmed with shame and torn with agony. It is also to be tempted to revenge—to wish that these cruel persecutors might themselves be smitten, for a time, at least, with the pain they visit upon their fellows. To Christianize Christians—this still remains the task of Christendom!

Bernard Shaw has declared that it is a crime to exhort the poor to be thrifty. "A. E.," the distinguished Irish poet, home from his recent visit to the United States, has proclaimed that "a spendthrift people is a prosperous people." Henry Ford long ago taught that high wages as the basis of spending power were the secret of good business. Messrs. Foster and Catchings have been building a new economics on this thesis. Thus does our lavish age turn on the old and venerated virtue of Thrift, and rend it utterly! It is high time that this were done, for Thrift is an outmoded virtue. It belonged to the days when, to quote the familiar phrase of the late Professor Patten, "the basis of civilization was deficit." It was in places like Scotland, and New England in the early days, where the margin between production and subsistance was so narrow as to keep starvation always in sight as a possible visitor, that Thrift developed as the greatest of all the virtues. But this situation was limited to no one country. Everywhere in the old days production was slow, painful and inadequate; and it was inevitable, if the race was to survive, that waste should be condemned as the unpardonable sin. But those days have passed, as Professor Patten pointed out years ago. The basis of civilization in our time—thanks to machinery, chemistry, intensive agriculture, and improved transportation—has been definitely shifted from deficit to surplus. It is now possible to produce more than we can consume. Once solve the problem of distribution as we have happily solved the problem of production, and there will be more than enough of this world's goods for everybody. Waste remains, even so, a social crime. But, on the other hand, Thrift remains nothing but a form of meagreness, miserliness, selfishness—well enough in days of scarcity, but today as unlovely

as it is unnecessary. Thrift has done its work. Let it now give place to the abundant life!

Frances Newman is dead! Do you know who she was? If not, we will tell you. She was a novelist. Do you know what she wrote? Can you give the titles of any of her books? No? Well, let us see—O, yes, here they are! Listed right here in the newspaper: "The Short Story's Mutations," "The Hardboiled Virgin," "Dead Lovers Are Faithful Lovers." Our knowledge of Miss Newman is rather unsatisfactory, isn't it? The New York *Times,* in the notice of her death, did not seem to think she was a person of any great importance. Her passing was sudden, yet the *Times,* read by the most intelligent clientéle in America, gave the event only five inches on the bottom half of a column on an inside page. And this is the woman whose "Hardboiled Virgin" was touted not only into a *success d'estime* but into a best seller by the literary critics of the highest standing in this country. What we have here is a beautiful illustration of what our established criticism of letters is doing in this country—lifting into fame and influence a brood of writers who have nothing to commend them but an innate cynicism, a trite sophistication, a large pretense of psychological subtlety, and a brutal capacity to shock. Now and again as in the case of Mrs. Virginia Wolff, there is added a real command of style. But Frances Newman had nothing of this last quality. She was a woman of an essentially vulgar mind, with meagre experience and no vision, and with a style so atrocious as to defy all description. And yet, because she had a sophistication as thick as the armor of a battleship, she was hailed as a great figure in contemporary literature. It is amazing how our "leading authors" these days write book after book, only to reveal that all their previous books have already been forgotten. Death uncovers the facts. Like Frances Newman, most of our newer authors are persons of no consequence. They write for one another and for their critics—not for the public, and assuredly not for posterity.

An Outline for a New College

II

Fifth,—Curriculum. Perhaps the most mooted question in higher education today is the problem of the content of study. Here we find a bewildering variety of novelties suggested, but we offer something which avoids extremes, at the same time provides a progressive experiment in both content and method.

In the first year we are to keep in mind the fact that we are dealing with young men and women just emerging from High School. They are not intellectually mature and should not be freely turned into the field of knowledge to pursue their own way without close and careful supervision. We do not believe in abolishing the class room, for there is no substitute for the good lecture and group discussion, when they are carried on with enthusiasm and competence.

But the number of classes would be somewhat reduced, and the program of the student would be greatly simplified and concentrated. One of the worst phases of most college programs today is the fact that they tend to produce intellectual St. Vitus' dance in the student, who rushes from chemistry to French, from French to psychology and from psychology to Latin civilization in one morning. His mind is in a state of distraction, and no sooner has he geared his thinking apparatus to one intellectual discipline, than he must jump to something totally foreign.

In our Freshman year we would limit the number of subjects taken in the morning to one, and a similar number in the afternoon. We would then have three consecutive hours of concentrated work on one type of discipline, thus allowing a sustained interest, and a thoroughgoing accomplishment. One of these hours might be in class, the others in library or laboratory, both in preparing for and following up the classroom discussion.

An interesting experiment along this line was recently reported in "The School Review" in an article by Mr. Willis Thompson. In a High School one subject was studied all day, instead of having four subjects in one day, and the answer made by students to questionnaires is illuminating. To quote in summary: —those reporting more benefit from 1 subject per day, 18; 4 subjects per day, 2.

Enjoyment of studies with one subject, 19; 4 subjects, 1.

Enjoyment of school with one subject at a time, 18; 4 subjects, 1.

Would choose one subject for next year, 19; 4 subjects, none.

The experiment is not conclusive on all points, but it is certainly indicative of a decided approval by the student.

Let us sketch a possible concrete program for a student in his first year in our new college, following this new plan. He would have four fields of knowledge in which to study. These would be grouped according to a natural division, in some such way as the following:

(a) Knowledge about himself, including some physiology, psychology and hygiene.

(b) Knowledge about the physical universe, selecting from chemistry, physics, biology and mathematics.

(c) Knowledge about society, including history.

(d) Knowledge of language and literature, including English and a foreign language.

This would seem to some people over-simplified and too much restricted but we believe that it is in line with the best educational ideal, which stresses the integration of knowledge and the natural inclination to study. Grouped as these subjects are, there is every reason to see why a student should master them. It is natural and inevitable that if he is to be an educated person, he must have a grasp of these fields of knowledge. And if possible the word "courses" would be dropped from the college vocabulary, substituting the expression already used, "field of knowledge," which connotes something more real and appealing than 67.63 or 49.17 which we find in so many catalogs.

There would be for every one of these major fields a library of selected books, giving the best literature covering the field. Each student is to be made familiar with these special libraries, and in order to graduate he must show that he has mastered the contents of at least some of them.

In the second year likewise, the student would have four fields of knowledge to cover, adding to the free choice and opening up more advanced disciplines.

At the beginning of the third year there would be a marked change in content and method of work, for normally a Junior is much more mature than a Sophomore and needs a different treatment. His work would begin to shape itself toward some profession or major interest, thus securing two ends. First, he would receive an added stimulus from the vocational motive, and secondly, he would begin to fit himself for some definite piece of service to society. But this college would not be primarily a vocational or professional school.

Being more mature he would have greater freedom. Emphasis would be placed on personal achievement, initiative and dependability. Work would become less in the nature of drill in the class and more in the nature of thesis, personal investigation and research. The object of this would be to gradually prepare the student for taking over responsibility for "standing on his own" and for proving his ability to become his own task-master. Any student who could not or would not drive himself along the line of his special interest would be dropped at this time as having received from college all that he could of benefit. There would be constant emphasis upon the fact that the overwhelming majority of people at this age (about 20) are self-supporting and are taking their work seriously. The college student would be made to realize that if he is exempted from this rule it is only in order to equip him to do better and more serious work in the world.

In the senior year this freedom would go further until the student is in somewhat the same position as the student in most European universities, viz., the responsibility being almost wholly upon him and very slightly upon the faculty.

During the last half of the senior year, the student would spend half his time "out in the world," serving an apprenticeship in several institutions so that he would gain a working knowledge of some of the problems of adult life in a normal community. He would thus not be thrown from theory into practice with the usual shock which comes to those who step from the college gates.

Sixth. Method. This college would depart from the usual practice of method in two or three important respects.

(a) Every subject taught would be the province of every member of the faculty and in that way a unity of purpose could be achieved. Let us illustrate. English composition is usually denoted as a "course" in the average college catalog. In this college it would be the business of every teacher to stress it. Usually, "themes" are handed in on subjects unrelated to other college problems. In this college the "themes" would relate to biology, geology, economics, philosophy, or any other academic discipline. English composition would be a part of all subjects, and it would last four years. The ability to write and speak clear, grammatical English would be a requirement of chemistry or mathematics. As one instance of the failure of the average college to do this, let us cite from a letter just received. It consists of two sentences, and it contains one glaring grammatical error, one omitted word, and one simple word misspelled. And the writer of the message is a graduate of a higher institution of learning graded A by our government, and he is now a student in the best law school in the United States.

Another subject usually taught in one semester of the Senior year is "ethics." Out in our college it would be taught in every class by every teacher. And not only that, but the Professor of Ethics would teach in the chemistry class, discussing the ethics of chemistry. And surely he would teach in the Economics Department, and in the History Department and so on throughout the entire category. The object of every teacher would be to give every student a grasp and mastery of the essentials of a good sound education rather than imparting the content of a "course."

(b) Students and faculty would meet at regular intervals in the evenings in small groups, for debates, discussions, outside speakers and other informal ways of carrying on phases of the problems they are studying. Furthermore, each student would join a "club" embracing his major interest and would meet at frequent intervals to "wrangle" with upper classmen. Those who are especially interested in French would converse in French (or try to), those interested in

English would write, those interested in sociology would do social work, etc. In such a way a more serious intellectual atmosphere would be maintained than in the case of most undergraduate institutions. A student in such a college could not loaf after he got in, and it is certain that the loafer would never apply for admission.

Seventh. Sports. There would be sports, a great deal of them, and of varied types. But there would be no intercollegiate games, no extreme training, no nerve-racking, body-wrenching strain, as is now practiced in most institutions. Athletic exercise would be required every day for four years, but such exercise would be made as natural and pleasurable as possible and would look to two fundamental ends:

(a) The building and maintaining of sound physical health, together with habits of exercise which will go on through life.

(b) The achieving of a mental hygiene which will keep the mind clean, vigorous and wholesome.

For these purposes there would be no need of a million dollar stadium, seating 50,000 people, or of elaborately equipped gymnasium. Simple apparatus would suffice. Most of the exercise would consist in outdoor games, such as tennis, baseball, golf, swimming, rowing walking etc. This does not exclude competitive games between groups, but such games would not be artificially stimulated and the primary object would never be to win, or to amuse the public, or to advertise the institution. All exercise and play would be considered as a fundamental part of the work of the college in building wholesome lives.

The cost? About three million. And our annual bill for cosmetics is about three times that much.

CLARENCE R. SKINNER.

[Concluded]

Jottings

Borough President Connolly, of New York, was recently convicted of graft involving $10,000,000 of the tax-payers' money, and was sentenced to one year in jail and $500 fine. This is the same penalty imposed by the law for spitting on the sidewalk. Law is wonderful, isn't it?

It takes *twenty* minutes in New York today to travel one mile through the center of the city. In the days of horse-drawn vehicles it took *five* minutes to travel the same mile. Thus is the pace of life quickened.

The Soviet government is planning the erection of a library which will be the largest in the world. The design provides, say the dispatches, "for every possible device for the comfort and interest of the reader, and for the expediting of research." One more bit of evidence to show what barbarians these Bolsheviks are!

The New York *Times* is a reliable newspaper, but when it reports that an actress's dress caught fire from a revolver shot and that she was badly burned about the legs, we frankly don't believe it. A woman's legs these days could no more be burned by a fire in her dress than the foundations of the Eiffel Tower could be burned by the searchlight on its peak.

Prohibition is terrible, so we are told! Yet even at its worst—as in New York, for example—it seems to be better than the old system. Thus, a recent observer tells us that "New York arrests 14 out of 10,000 for drunkenness; London convicts, not merely arrests, 48 out of 10,000, and Paris, 40 out of 10,000."

A curious case of governmental repression is seen in the refusal of the Principal of the Technical Institute in Bombay, India, to allow the students to weave jacquard portraits of Gandhi and other heroes of the people. The students may weave portraits of viceroys, governors, scientists, but not of the Mahatma. As one might expect, the students have unanimously agreed not to weave any portraits at all under these restrictions.

J. H. H.

Beyond the Bounds

Come, and to you will I a truth unfold:
There's more of God than all men's temples hold.

There's more of God—more that we truly need—
Than ever can be found in church or creed.

The Limitless, O Man! we cannot know
By any straight-drawn line "thus and so."

In vain the heights we struggle to ascend;
Or deep or far to find of truth the end.

Our words but show how little we can reach
Of wondrous things beyond the bounds of speech.

From nearest atom unto farthest star
He is the Oneness of all things that are.

Within the mind, truer than our best thought,
Lives He by whom the Universe is wrought.

We need no altar lights in temples dim
Once we have learned to rightly think of Him.

We need no priest or book of Him to tell
Once in His Oneness we have learned to dwell.

VICTOR E. SOUTHWORTH.

The Neighborhood School

Governor William Bradford says that the first party to land from the Mayflower "found diverse cornfields." The Indians were living in small communities, partly by hunting and fishing, but largely by agriculture. Their leading crop was maize, still the leading crop of American farms. They had developed maize from a wild grass and had domesticated it so thoroughly that it can no more maintain itself without man's help than the domestic sheep; they had produced several varieties and were keeping them distinct. From the Indians, white men learned how to grow Indian corn and how to store it in a crib set on posts with an airspace between the ground and the floor of the corn-crib. Since the work of neolithic Europeans, no achievement in plant-breeding is comparable to the Indians' work with maize.

Like the Indians, the white settlers lived in groups of families, not in isolated homes, and supported themselves by hunting, fishing and farming. Such groups of families have won the continent for white men, as they long before had subdued the wilderness of the Old World. Isolated individuals and families have done some scouting, but settling lands has been work for settlements or neighborhoods. The covered wagon was a part of a wagon train that established a settlement.

The people of the earliest white settlements in America brought with them all the skill and knowledge of their race and time that they could use. They knew when and how to plant, to cultivate and to harvest the farm and garden crops; the word "culture" is borrowed from such work of farmers. They were familiar with the ways and uses of their farm animals. They knew how to improve their crops and livestock as farmers had done since the beginning of agriculture. The neighbors felled trees, sawed or hewed boards from them, built houses and made furniture. They tanned leather and worked it into shoes and harness. They grew flax and wool, which were spun, dyed, woven and made into garments in the neighborhood. They made their own farm implements. The neighborhood was self-sufficient, though goods were exchanged between communities by barter and gift. Such exchanges had been customary also among the Indians; obsidian arrow-heads are found two thousand miles from the source of the obsidian. Like the body of skill and knowledge that maintained an Indian village, the skill and knowledge that made a settlement of white men what it was had little relation to books. The man of books in the settlement was the theologian; mundane matters were learned through observation and experience.

The wisdom of Roger Bacon holds for him preeminence among medieval scientists and has given his magic a place in legend. He says that he learned more from rural folk than from "all the doctors." If he had learned from the doctors only, his learning would now be less esteemed. Neighborhood lore has not been despised by those who have known it, before Roger Bacon and since. In our time, Thomas Nixon Carver is among the initiated; he testifies:

> An ancient occupation, pursued by countless generations, accumulates a vast fund of wisdom and skill, much of which escapes the pages of the written book, being transmitted from father to son on the thin air of oral tradition or of living example. Such an occupation is agriculture. Working in flint has been called the oldest trade in the world, but tilling the soil has first claim to that distinction, unless the word "trade" is to be applied to special mechanical occupations only. In consequence of its antiquity and its universality there has developed a body of rural lore and technic, which has no counterpart anywhere else, but which is entirely underestimated by, if not absolutely unknown to, the urbanite. But because so much of it is learned outside of schools, by the actual process of doing rural work, father and son working together generation after generation, it does not commonly go under the name of "learning." Moreover, the marvelous technic of rural work is acquired in such a commonplace way that we frequently regard it as a matter of course, and do not appreciate that it is real technic. There are probably no instruments known to any craft which are more perfect in their adaptation, with more fine points upon which excellence in their form and construction depends, than some of the simpler implements of modern husbandry.

The worker in flint was a villager with some knowledge of farming; every man of the village had some skill in the flint-worker's trade. The village blacksmith in our time has a garden, a cow and a pig or two and grows his potatoes and corn. His farm neighbors know something of blacksmithing; many a farm has its own anvil and forge. In such a diversified neighborhood as a pioneer settlement, every member of the community knows something of the tools and processes of every shop and something of farm work through the year.

The knowledge and the skill that are common property in such a neighborhood are no more to be learned from books than is playing the violin. Farmers say that it takes three generations to make a wheat-grower. The Negro exodus has corrected what seemed a fixed idea that growing cotton is work for the lazy and unskilled; the world does not succeed in replacing its cotton-growers. When the work of spinning, dyeing and weaving flax would now again be profitable in American farm homes, the tradition has been lost by two or three generations of disuse and is hard to recover; in a flax-growing neighborhood, nobody is competent even to prepare the flax for spinning. European farm neighborhoods that have not lost such traditions still do better weaving than machines can do, and the work is keeping neighborhoods prosperous in times of trial; the hand loom has never been superseded in the best and finest weaving. So simple a knack as making straw hats seems difficult when the skill has been lost, though possibly a farm family is not paid enough for its year's work to buy its hats which are products of distant farm homes. A neighborhood that helps to maintain commercial centers by marketing grains below the cost of production may have to buy its breakfast-foods and even its flour because it has forgotten how to make them. The exchange proves unprofitable; but, as Thorstein Veblen writes:

> In such case it is likely to result that the community will be unable to fall back on a state of the industrial arts suited to the reduced circumstances into which it finds itself thrown, having lost the use of many of the technological elements familiar to earlier generations that lived under similar circumstances, and so the industrial community finds itself in many respects driven to make a virtually new beginning, from a more rudimentary starting point than the situation might otherwise call for."

Many a rural community from which the country doctor has gone finds itself now more helpless in time of affliction than it was before the country doctor came. Essentially all known medicinal plants were in the *materia medica* of the farm village at the dawn of history; the use of quinine was learned from the Indians.

A neighborhood is made up of young and old, wise and foolish, pious and profane. Nobody can be exclusive in a neighborhood; everybody has to learn ways of associating more or less with everybody else. The neighborhood has folkways found serviceable for such purposes and approved. They include hospitality to the stranger, which averts hostilities with other neighborhoods and permits exchange of commodities and participation in common rites and festivals. These folkways are the neighborhood's courtesy; the manners of Arcadian shepherds were reputed the finest in ancient Greece, and the courtesy of the medieval landed classes is still basic and valid. The same folkways are law; they are also righteousness and the will of whatever gods may be. They are *tao*, "the path" of the Chinese; they are the Hebrew *mishpat*, translated in our Bible by such words as "custom," "law" and "justice."

A child in a rural neighborhood plays with other children and also works with its elders; elsewhere child labor is an evil and is suppressed or should be. A factory or an office, like a reception or a ball, is no place for children; but there is education and not harm in bringing in the cows and in carrying the water-jug to the harvest-field. Children are not in the way at fairs and festivals; to make such occasions they are needed, as others are.

Whether the rural neighborhood has a school or not, it has education. A child cannot help learning something of what is remembered of neolithic methods with the staple crops and farm animals; they were all domesticated in neolithic time. This learning is a beginning merely, but it is so sound a foundation that modern industrialism is helpless without it; we deprive masses of all access to neolithic education but proceed on the insecure assumption that a sufficient number will know and follow neolithic ways. As Norman Angell writes:

> It is merely a lofty disregard of the practical difficulties to suppose that in anything under several generations these dense industrial populations could be turned into growers of food.

In less tangible matters also, the neighborhood has its own educational advantages. Shakespeare and Lincoln were geniuses if the word has a meaning, but they were not uneducated and their education was not that of a school. They needed what neighborhoods had given them. Homer and his Achilles were educated as they were, as were possibly the most recent Americans to win secure places in our literary history, William Dean Howells and Mark Twain. Greek education when Greece was not decadent utilized the neighborhood far more than buildings or books; Socrates and his many predecessors were not walled in or aloof and were not primarily men of books.

To illiterates, letters are mysterious and, therefore, supernatural. To the pagan English, the word "rune" meant both "letter" and "magic." Runes etched on sword-blades were thought to glow in battle and to give victory. They did not really glow, more than other marks on sword-blades, and what they spelled may have been merely the name of some god now dead. Much that letters have spelled has proved even more ephemeral; few of the books a decade old are now of any use. The Chinese and the Mohammedans are schooled in books that we omit; they have got on very well without the magic in our books; the ancient Greeks had none of it. Illiterates are not necessarily ignorant or unprogressive; one of their achievements was the invention of letters. Before that event, use had developed the human brain to its present capacity.

Books have their merits, though good St. Francis found reason to discard them. The open book has become the symbol of the school. The school is here to stay, and its primary function will continue to be opening the book. Illiterates would see to that if others were negligent, for books retain magic about in the degree to which they retain mystery; an Emerson or a Darwin grows skeptical of books and book schools. Emerson says: "I had better never see a book than to be warped by its attraction clean out of my own orbit and made a satellite instead of a system. The one thing in the world, of value, is the active soul." "Only so much do I know as I have lived." Professor Sumner says in "Folkways," "Our faith in the power of book learning is excessive and unfounded. It is a superstition of the age." The superstition rules; we shall continue to have compulsory education, and the schools will continue to open the book and teach reading. They will teach writing and arithmetic also, though anybody who can read can learn them without schooling. Compulsion, no doubt, helps to disseminate square root, cube root and other mysteries that are found to depart after examinations.

Beyond reading, writing and arithmetic, the way in book learning is not certainly described. The history of our native land seems desirable if we happen not to remove across some border. It tells what kind of man Benjamin Harrison was, though we are doubtful about the president now in office and his predecessor; it tells about the generals of the war of 1812 and does not tell who improved our Indian corn. Immigrants especially, it seems, should be taught our Civil Government, though a book or a teacher that taught how we really are governed would be ejected from any school. Certainly, one who sees in book learning a way that he wants to take can follow it to the end unaided, as has been proved again and again. The outstanding American names in electrical science are Franklin, Morse and Edison; in statesmanship, it is through Washington and Lincoln that we are most favorably known to the world.

Compulsory schooling in books keeps city children off the streets and out of the way of apartments, offices and factories; it yields certificates and diplomas that are accepted as evidence of standardized products. The educational system is held to prepare for business management and its clerical and professional retinues. Production and the attainment of a good life for producers are not conspicuous objects of the system as now standardized in the parts of the world dominated by commercialism. The educated man is expected to wear a white collar and to seek profits or a share from their disbursement; if he farms he disgraces his school. Standardized agricultural education is recommended as preparation for rural banking or the grain business.

The more intelligent urban teachers are perfectly aware of the distinction between book learning and education. As far as the superstition of their rulers permits and when the rulers are not looking, they try to educate the immature to whom they stand in place of parents. The endeavor consists in a search for substitutes for the realities of a rural neighborhood; like Froebel, the teachers know that "The school is an imperfect substitute for the home." The kindergarten

of a European city "is now a large farm where children go in the morning for the day. Here they learn to milk cows, to care for milk, to churn cream, to plant and tend a little garden, to put up preserves, and in various ways to imitate the work of grownups." From the kindergarten on, the more intelligent and skilled the teacher is, the more are useful exercises, or imitations of useful exercises, substituted for learning and forgetting books. The process cannot go far because it cannot be standardized and is aside from the business of guiding pupils past their examinations.

The most of our sovereign states have become urban, and the urban authorities who standardize urban schools have the altruistic will to bring the rural school up to urban standards. Morality dictates that the rural child should have as good an education as the city child; the rural school building should be as high and otherwise as spacious as the city school buildings. The school is the building, and the bigger the building the better the school. To fill the building or to mitigate its vacancies, children are brought in "kid-wagons" routed along the highways. The children of the byways walk to these routes and wait in all weathers for the ride to the school; morning and evening journeys in the "kid-wagons" replace the obsolete morning and evening chores and diversions about the farm and the farm home. Within the school is standardized book learning, leading through examinations to credits, certificates and diplomas. As far as exigencies permit, the more intelligent rural teachers relieve the book learning by urban substitutes for the realities of the farm and the farm neighborhood. So the rural school may become almost as good as a city school as far as it goes. Its graduates can go to a higher city school. That is the line of least resistance; they go and they do not return. The service the school has done then is the best possible if the school is an urban outpost and recruiting agency facilitating the escape of rural youth to a better environment.

If the neighborhood could retain the wealth produced from its natural resources by its labor and skill, it would not need to make any appeal *in forma pauperis* for money enough to give its teacher as good a life as that of his neighbors, which would then be good enough. If the neighborhood might choose its teacher with no interference from the outside, the teacher would not be an illiterate; the superstition of the open book would prevent. The teacher would teach reading, writing and arithmetic. What he would teach besides, nobody knows; nobody knows what he should teach. He would have the freedom that a farmer or a physician has and he might make as good use of it. He might be no better equipped with certificates and diplomas than Shakespeare or Lincoln was, but almost certainly he would know a rural neighborhood as intimately as they; he would thus have the primary qualification of the ancient Greek teacher, a qualification necessarily omitted in standardizing and necessarily lacking in migratory pedagogic apprentices.

When urban standardization of rural school recognizes that they are peculiar, it requires the teaching of agriculture. The standardized teacher is on insecure ground in this subject and his critics are as keen as old-time guildsmen in their handicrafts. He has been away from the farm too much; the higher the degree of his standardization, the more he has been away from the farm. The neighborhood might look after its agriculture well enough, with the help of the bulletins with which it is supplied. What it wants, it alone can say. A discipline on which the folk-schools of Denmark agree is music; music is taught in every one of them; it is not required, for there are no requirements, but it is wanted by every student in every folk-school and it is taught. It held a comparable place in the schools of ancient Greece.

A neighborhood might wish to revive an industry that it had lost or to establish some new industry. Centralization in an urban plant has proved unnecessary and uneconomic in many handicrafts and in many uses of modern machines. To the neighborhood an industry might make the difference between life and death. The Deserted Village is a village that has lost its industries,; it betokens rural exodus and urban unemployment. Villages that hold industries or win them back are commonly not impoverished and decadent like neighborhoods, states and nations that specialize in an agriculture subject to commercialism. A teacher who knew his alphabet and his music well enough to content a neighborhood might be desired especially because of his competence to restore a neighborhood trade. His fitness for the work would not be known to standardization, and it needs not follow from his success that teachers everywhere must adopt his ways.

Rural neighborhoods tend to hold that a rural school might help its neighborhood most if it might be the neighborhood's school. Against all reason, as their betters see it, they resist progress in consolidation, standardization and supervision. The neighborhood has little left but its school; if this might regain its autonomy, as happened in Denmark, the school might make the neighborhood habitable again, as autonomous schools in Denmark have done.

Farmers understand that they must "solve their own problems"; exodus is a common solution. Some of those still on the land have been fighting with more strength than anybody thought was left in them for the privilege of solving their school problems; while papers have been featuring the farmers' politics, mass meetings in rural neighborhoods have been in behalf of autonomous schools. *The Rural New-Yorker* says:

> We think March 19, 1924, stands out as the biggest day New York farmers have yet known. We refer to the hearing at Albany on the school bill.

The hearing had been preceded by meetings in rural schoolhouses throughout the state, the largest school meetings in many years. "In at least ninety per cent of them the vote against the proposed school bill was unanimous." Further progress in consolidation, standardization and supervision of rural schools was the issue; the farmers were against it; they "not only protested against the bill, but they declared their willingness to improve their home schools if they might work without interference." The support of the bill included the Governor; the Commissioner of Education; "the tremendous power exercised by the College of Agriculture at Cornell, which functions chiefly through the local county Farm Bureau and Home Bureaus, the policies of which organizations are controlled by Cornell by law"; the house of delegates of the New York State Teachers' Association; "the official machinery of every farm organization"; and "every farm paper in the territory except the Rural New-Yorker." In the end, the farmers have had their

way for the present; their schools have sustained no new loss of autonomy. A farm woman writes:

It has been impossible to get any information from the newspapers: they misrepresent the matter so. They used the words "hectic" and "riotous" in describing the meetings held at Syracuse and Albany, and the people who attended those meetings tell us they were nothing of the kind. . . . If the country people are let alone, they will improve their own schools.

Bureaucracy comes bearing gifts; it will give doles of the money derived from neighborhoods; but viewing at short range its achievements to date, neighborhoods are expressing a preference for autonomy. The little red schoolhouse is not the goal, though a neighborhood might like to determine the size and the color of the house. It might like autonomy for a neighborhood school that would be as big as the neighborhood and would make full use of such educational advantages as the neighborhood holds. The available properties include the neighborhood's vision of what it might become. The industries of Amana, the music of Lindsborg and the drama of Oberammergau are not works of supermen. They suggest possibilities, and "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Rural neighborhoods have been abandoned often in the past; their vision has something to do with their life. Their schools are not a matter of indifference to them, but the final strongholds of their faith.

From acquaintance with masters of folk schools in Denmark, C. J. Galpin says:

These Danish schoolmasters are like the prophets of Israel. They are great souls themselves. Learned, simple in habits, emotional, their psychology is tremendously real.

The achievements of Danish rural schools would have been impossible without dropping the paraphernalia of standardization and supervision. To freedom in teaching, men worthy of it are attracted; they earn their pay, but pay is not the inspiration of prophets of Israel or masters of folk schools. American rural schools may have less need of help than of autonomies, of freedom from subordination and control. The master of an autonomous rural school might be, as in Denmark, the most useful man in his neighborhood, free, as the American teacher is not, to lead his neighbors even in political and economic heresies; he might take an unstandardized interest in an impending or persistent deflation.

Frederick C. Howe writes:

Education in Denmark treats the teacher as a free person. It appeals to the best the instructors have to offer. It invites originality, research, stimulus and community activity, while in the United States these qualities are a dangerous thing for a teacher to possess. This is as true of our colleges as it is of our schools. We denature our teachers and wonder why teaching is so bad. It is not the lack of equipment, it is not a lack of talent; the reason teaching is lacking in inspiration in this country, the reason why our schools are lacking in interest to the teacher and the pupil, is the position in which we have placed the teacher and the denial of any right to opinions or to action on any subject of vital or commanding interest to the community.

Comparing rural high schools in America with their unstandardized, autonomous predecessors, Warren H. Wilson says:

Great rural teachers have arisen in the old academies and in the fitting schools which succeeded them, but none like these has come up from the expensively equipped and lavishly furnished rural high school. . . . The public high schools have ampler funds; they have the state administration to support them and sustain them, with public opinion at the present time wholly in their favor. Yet the high school in the country has, so far as national interests go, proven singularly indifferent. If it were, with its greater resources, to occupy the place in modern life which the academies occupied a century ago, families would be moving out into the country towns from the great cities in order to educate their children.

C. F. ANSLEY.

The Story of My Experiments with Truth

[The Autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi]

(Copyright, 1927)

PART V—CHAPTERS VI AND VII

Wooing

On arrival in Poona, we found ourselves, after the performance of the *shraddha* ceremonies, discussing the future of the Society and the question as to whether I should join it or not. This question of membership proved a very delicate matter for me to handle. Whilst Gokhale was there I did not have to seek admission as a member. I had simply to obey his wish, a position I loved to be in. Launching on the stormy sea of Indian public life I was in need of a sure pilot. I had had one in Gokhale and had felt secure in his keeping. Now that he was gone, I was thrown on my own resources, and I felt that it was my duty to seek admission. That, I thought, would please Gokhale's spirit. So without hesitation and with firmness I began the wooing.

Most of the members of the Society were in Poona at this juncture. I set about pleading with them and tried to dispel their fears about me. But I saw that they were divided. One section favoured my admission, the other was strongly against it. I knew that neither yielded to the other in its affection for me, but possibly their loyalty to the Society was greater, at any rate, not less than their love for me.

All our discussions were therefore free from bitterness and strictly confined to matters of principle. The section that was opposed to me held that they and I were as the poles asunder in various vital matters, and they felt that my membership was likely to imperil the very objects for which the Society was founded. This naturally was more than they could bear.

We dispersed after prolonged discussions, the final decision being postponed to a later date.

I was considerably agitated as I returned home. Was it right for me to be admitted by a majority vote? Would it be consonant with my loyalty to Gokhale? I saw it clearly that when there was such a sharp division amongst the members of the Society over admitting me, by far the best course for me was to withdraw my application for admission and save those opposed to me from a delicate situation. Therein I thought lay my loyalty to the Society and to Gokhale. The decision

came to me in a flash and immediately I wrote to Mr. Shastri asking him not to have the adjourned meeting at all. Those who had opposed my application fully appreciated the decision. It saved them from an awkward position and bound us in closer bonds of friendship. The withdrawal of my application made me truly a member of the Society.

Experience now tells me that it was well that I did not formally become a member and that the opposition of those who had been against me was justified. Experience has shown, too, that our views on matters of principle were widely divergent. But the recognition of the differences has meant no estrangement or bitterness between us. We have remained as brothers and the Society's Poona home has always been for me a place of pilgrimage.

It is true that I did not officially become a member of the Society, but I have ever been a member in spirit. Spiritual relationship is far more precious than the physical. Physical relationship divorced from the spiritual is like body without soul.

Kumbha Mela

On my way to Rangoon where I wanted to meet Dr. Mehta I had to halt at Calcutta. I was the guest of the late Babu Bhupendranath Basu there. Bengali hospitality reached its climax here. In those days I was a strict fruitarian, so all the fruits and nuts available in Calcutta were ordered for me. The ladies of the house kept awake all night, skinning various nuts. Every possible care was taken in dressing fresh fruit in the Indian style. Numerous delicacies were prepared for my companions, amongst whom was my son Ramdas. Much as I could appreciate this affectionate hospitality, I could not bear the thought of a whole household being occupied in entertaining two or three guests. But as yet I saw no escape from such embarrassing attentions.

On the boat going to Rangoon I was a deck passenger. If excess of attention embarrassed us in Sjt. Basu's house, grossest inattention even to the elementary comforts of deck passengers was our lot on the boat. What was an apology for a bathroom was unbearably dirty, the latrines were stinking sinks. To use the latrine one had to wade through urine and excreta or jump over them.

This was more than flesh and blood could bear. I approached the Chief Officer without avail. If there was anything lacking to complete the picture of stink and filth the passengers furnished it by their thoughtless habits. They spat where they sat, dirtied the surroundings with the leavings of their food, tobacco and betel leaves. There was no end to the noise and every one tried to monopolize as much room as possible. Their luggage took up more room than they. We had thus two days of the severest trial.

On reaching Rangoon I wrote to the Agent of the Steamship Company acquainting him with all the facts. Thanks to this letter and to Dr. Mehta's efforts in the matter, the return journey though on deck was less unbearable.

In Rangoon my fruitarian diet was again a source of additional trouble to the host. But since Dr. Mehta's home was as good as my own, I could control somewhat the lavishness of the menu. However, as I had not set any limit to the articles I might eat, the palate and the eye refused to put an effective check on the supply of varieties ordered. There was no regular hours for meals. Personally I preferred having the last meal before nightfall. Nevertheless as a rule it could not be had before eight or nine.

This year—1915—was the year of the Kumbha fair which is held at Hardvar once every 12 years. I was by no means eager to attend the fair, but I was anxious to meet Mahatma Munshiramji, who was in his Gurukul. Gokhale's Society had send a big volunteer corps for service at the Kumbha. Pandit Hridayanath Kunzru was at the head, and the late Dr. Dev was the medical officer. I was invited to send the Phoenix party to assist them and so Maganlal Gandhi had already preceded me. On my return from Rangoon I joined the band.

The journey from Calcutta to Hardvar was particularly trying. Sometimes the compartments had no lights. From Saharanpur we were huddled into carriages for goods or cattle. These had no roofs, and what with the blazing midday sun overhead and the scorching iron floor beneath, we were all but roasted. The pangs of thirst caused by even such a journey as this could not persuade orthodox Hindus to take water, if it was "Musalmani." They waited until they could get the "Hindu" water. These very Hindus, let it be noted, do not so much as hesitate or inquire, when during illness the doctor administers them wine, or prescribes beef tea or a Musalman or Christian compounder gives them water!

Our stay in Shantiniketan had taught us that the scavenger's work would be our special function in India. Now for the volunteers in Hardvar, tents had been pitched in a *dharmashala,* and Dr. Dev had dug some pits to be used as latrines. He had to depend on paid scavengers for looking after these. Here was work for the Phoenix party. We offered to cover up the excreta with earth and to see to its disposal, and Dr. Dev gladly accepted our offer. The offer was naturally made by me, but it was Maganlal Gandhi who had to execute it. My business was mostly to keep sitting in the tent giving *darshan* and holding religious and other discussions with numerous pilgrims who called on me. This left me not a minute which I could call my own. I was followed even to the bathing *ghat* by these *darshan* seekers, nor did they leave me alone whilst I was having my meals. Thus it was in Hardvar that I realized what a deep impression my humble services in South Africa had made throughout the whole of India.

But this was no enviable position to be in. I felt as though I was between the devil and the deep sea. Where no one recognized me, I had to put up with the hardships that fall to the lot of the millions in this land, *e. g.,* in railway traveling. Where I was surrounded by people who had heard of me I was the victim of their craze for *darshan.* Which of the two conditions was more pitiable I have often been at a loss to determine. This at least I know, that the *darshanvalas'* blind love has often made me angry, and more often sore at heart. Whereas third class traveling, though often trying, has been uplifting and has hardly ever roused me to anger.

I was in those days strong enough to roam about a lot, and was fortunately not so known as not to be able to go in the streets without creating much fuss. During these roamings I came to observe more of the pilgrims' absentmindedness, hypocrisy and slovenliness than of their piety. The swarm of *sadhus,* who

had descended there, seemed to have been born but to enjoy the good things of life.

Here I saw a cow with five feet! I was astonished, but knowing men soon disillusioned me. The poor five-footed cow was a sacrifice to the greed of the wicked. I learnt that the fifth foot was nothing else but a foot cut off from a live calf and grafted upon the shoulder of the cow! The result of this double cruelty was exploited to fleece the ignorant of their money. There was no Hindu but would be attracted by a five-footed cow, and no Hindu but would lavish his charity on such a miraculous cow.

The day of the fair was now upon us. It proved a red letter day for me. I had not gone to Hardvar with the sentiments of a pilgrim. I have never thought of frequenting places of pilgrimage in search of piety. But the seventeen lakhs of men that were reported to be there could not all be hypocrites or mere sightseers. I had no doubt that countless people amongst them had gone there to earn merit, and for self-purification. It is difficult, if not impossible, to say to what extent this kind of faith uplifts the soul.

I therefore passed the whole night immersed in deep thought. There were those pious souls in the midst of the hypocrisy that surrounded them. They would be free of guilt before their Maker. If the visit to Hardvar was in itself a sin, I must publicy protest against it, and leave Hardvar on the day of Kumbha. If the pilgrimage to Hardvar and to the Kumbha fair was not sinful, I must impose some act of self-denial on myself in atonement for the iniquity prevailing there, and purify myself. This was quite natural for me. My life is based on disciplinary resolutions. I thought of the unnecessary trouble I had caused to my hosts at Calcutta and Rangoon, who had so lavishly entertained me. I therefore decided to limit the articles of my diet and to have my final meal before sunset. I was convinced that if I did not impose these restrictions on myself, I should put my future hosts to considerable inconvenience and should engage them in serving me rather than engage myself in service. So I pledged myself never whilst in India to take more than five articles in twenty-four hours, and never to eat after dark. I gave the fullest thought to the difficulties I might have to face. But I wanted to leave no loophole. I rehearsed to myself what would happen during an illness, if I counted medicine among the five articles, and made no exception in favor of special articles of diet. I finally decided that there should be no exception on any account whatsoever.

I have been under these vows for now thirteen years. They have subjected me to a severe test, but I am able to testify that they have also served as my shield. I am of opinion that they have added a few years to my life and saved me from many an illness.

M. K. GANDHI.

(*Translated from Navajivan by Mahadeo Desai.*)

The Study Table

An American Epic

This long and most ambitious poem* immediately suggests certain other poems. Its derivation from Walt Whitman, for example, is obvious, not only in the subject, but in the style, the point of view, and the whole informing spirit. This is the kind of poem that Whitman would have written had he had an epic instead of a lyric mind. As it is Benét could never have written this work had not the "good, gray poet" gone on before.

But "John Brown's Body" brings to mind other and much more recent poems. Alfred Noyes' popular and noble epic of Elizabethan days, "Drake," and Thomas Hardy's stupendous epic-drama of the Napoleonic era, "The Dynasts!" Benét has attempted to do in his way, and for a great moment in his country's history, what Noyes and Hardy have done. The comparison is inevitable, and for our American poet unfortunate, for he has failed where the others have succeeded.

It is perhaps, unfair to compare Benét's poem with such an eternal masterpiece as "The Dynasts." As well compare it with "Paradise Lost" or "The Divine Comedy," for Hardy's work is one of the few overshadowing epics of all time! Some centuries must pass before English-speaking men see anything like it again. Yet is the comparison fruitful, for it shows conclusively one reason, at least, for Benét's failure. "The Dynasts," like the "Iliad" and the "Aenead," and "Paradise Lost," has a cosmic viewpoint. The tale is seen in a single perspective, and therefore becomes, for all its stupendous bulk, a unitary thing. It is an organism, in other words, which lives and grows from out a single mystery of being. Not so with "John Brown's Body!" This poem is a series of collected pieces, like gems upon a string, not an integrated series of living cells as in a plant or animal. "The Dynasts" could no more be taken apart without destruction, than a human body could be dissected without death. But "John Brown's Body," so loosely are its parts held together, could be torn into fragments almost with advantage to its essential character. It is a collection, in other words, of narratives, dramatic episodes, lyrics, hymns, and even occasional prose passages. The story jumps from character to character, from scene to scene, with no apparent reason, and with no unbroken thread of life to give it continuity. One wonders what the poet is really trying to do—to project the picture of an era, to tell the personal stories of Ellyat and Wingate, or to give us snap-shots of battle-scenes and historical characters like Lincoln and Stonewall Jackson. As a scrap-book, a *pot pourri,* the poem is not seldom interesting, in places beautiful and stirring, once or twice sublime. But as a single work of epic spirit and design, it breaks down everywhere. Benét, after all, is a lyricist—more like Whitman than he imagines!

The comparison with Noyes' "Drake" is fairer, for while this poem is highly successful—much more successful than Noyes' later and even more ambitious work—it is not one of the few great masterpieces of history. And the comparison is valuable, for it reveals the second reason why Benét has not succeeded better with his undertaking. Noyes' modern epic, whatever

*"John Brown's Body," by Stephen Vincent Benét. Published by Doubleday Doran & Co. $2.50.

else it had or didn't have, had *style*. The verse-form wisely chosen in the great tradition, was lifted to a high plane of dignity and beauty, and held there throughout. Full of light and color, it flashed like banners in the wind, and swept along like the flight of ships before a fast-chasing gale. Noyes, for all his essential superficiality, his sheer intellectual incapacity for an epic task, had the poet's instinct for style, and thus produced a sustained poem which appeared much greater than it really was. Now it is just this all-important element of style which Benét, except in his lyric pieces and certain isolated passages like the long monologue of Lincoln before Antietam, lacks utterly. His narrative medium is the most slovenly, commonplace, and ineffective verse that we have ever read. It moves for whole pages like poorly-written journalese. Here and there are brilliant phrases, sometimes whole lines of eloquence and beauty, like particles of gold in the sand of a river-bed. But most of it is just sand! We recall a story of a little boy who loved to have "Paradise Lost" read to him. "But do you understand it," asked a skeptical visitor one day. "No," said the boy, "but I love the noise of it." That's the magic of style! This boy heard the majestic organ-tones in Milton's verse. Every reader catches the blare of trumpets and the surge of the sea in "Drake." But in "John Brown's Body" there is nothing of this sort. Mostly the poem moves on dull, dead levels which makes it unutterably tedious before it is done. Benét himself was terribly tired at the end.

We hate to say this, for we have long been an admirer of Benét's verse. He is a true poet. Furthermore, he has shown in this work of his what our American poets should be doing—delving in the epic material of our native history! Even the despised Longfellow did this far better than any of our modern bards. Benét, therefore, has attempted a great and true task. Catching the sublime inspiration of John Brown's death, he has moved through the Civil War, and told its tale in the lives of the great and humble. To have failed at such a task as this is better than to have succeeded at much else. If only for what he has tried to achieve, this poet deserves our thanks. But the American epic still remains to be written.

JOHN HAYNES HOLMES.

Correspondence

Noise!

Editor of UNITY:

Dear Sir: Your article, "Noise," in Oct. 8th edition of UNITY was echoed from the depths of my own soul. Having recently returned from a small city in the middle west, where it was comparatively quiet, I was positively stunned by the noises of this rapidly growing city, and my soul cried out, "O Lord, how long?"

Yes, I, too, believe that the younger generation is in danger of annihilation through overstimulation, through ever increasing vibration which envelops us wherever we go. One needs only to watch the children in school or even the babes in their mother's arms—at least, that is where they belong—and it is plain to be seen what effect the hurry and flurry has upon them.

Why is it that children in their 'teens, and even before, are dying of heart trouble, diabetes, nervous prostration, etc., diseases that we used to think belonged to adults? In spite of vaccines, antitoxins and other so-called preventives, is the human race really improving?

What is it all about???

My cry is not only for the suppression of noise, but also gas fumes—which are eating at our lung tissues. It is time that the experimenters were laying aside their experiments for producing greater speed and worked for *greater silence* and *smokeless and fumeless fuel.*

Although I have a strong physique and have splendid health, every evening I go home with nerves all a-quiver, in a state of complete exhaustion from rushing across streets, being crowded into street cars or motor buses like an animal pushed along to slaughter, and then with a crash and a clang being hurried to my destination—and at the same time to my destruction. I wonder how those with weaker bodies have any chance at all.

There must be a remedy! It can come only when man realizes that he has become slave to mechanical things and rises up in the majesty of his Manhood as master of the mechanical world.

How can this be done?

I have enjoyed many of your articles, but this one touched a very vital spot.

HELENE ALLENENDINGER.

Detroit, Mich.

An Appeal

Editor of UNITY:

One of the finest Chinese students I ever met is Mr. Y. Y. Tsang, when he was studying in Seattle, in the University. He is now in China and has been made Vice-President of the Fuh Tan University, Shanghai. I happen to know what he would be willing to receive for the University books for the library. And, now, I am taking the liberty to suggest to the readers of UNITY (in all parts of the country and in other lands) to give him a little Christmas shower of books. The readers of UNITY are intelligent enough to know what kind of books would be suitable for a college library, and the Chinese appreciate the latest and best. No one need stop at one book. No objection to classes or even churches combining in a shower. Send them direct (not to UNITY, nor the writer) by mail to Mr. Y. Y. TSANG—FUH TAN UNIVERSITY—AVENUE HAIG—SHANGHAI—CHINA.

SYDNEY STRONG.

Other papers please copy.

A Great Idea!

Editor of UNITY:

I have been enjoying UNITY so much since I began to read it regularly again. . .

I have an idea to help world peace—most simple, but may be the better for that. Let every friend of peace, the world over, date his letters not only "Anno Domini" but "Anno Pocis," beginning with the year of the Kellogg Pact as the year 1 of Peace, e. g., A. D. 1928 and A. P. 1.

If the Pope would start this, so it wouldn't seem blasphemous to Christians, and if Gandhi and others in other lands would follow, it would show the politicians what a vote there is for peace.

F. G. B.

Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

A Protest

Editor of UNITY:

UNITY as well as some other liberal periodicals occasionally "goes native." An example is your support of Herbert Hoover. As a former third party Prohibitionist who attended the Columbus and Atlantic City conventions in 1908 and 1912 and who voted for Chafin in 1912 and for Hanly in 1916 I wish to protest. In view of Hoover's Madison Garden speech, Senator Norris' stand, and Re-

The Field

"The world is my country, to do good is my Religion."

PEOPLE OF FRANCE OUTLAW WAR!*

The Governments of the principal nations of the world have now *outlawed war* by solemn treaty. Men and women of France, the victory for you is immense; but all is being and will be done to gloss over the deed or to make you forget it. Open your eyes! War is outlawed, do you understand all that this means?

It Means. The Abolition of War.

It Means. That just as slavery, serfdom, torture and so many other barbaric institutions ended by being abolished so do we now decree by common accord that: *Between us war shall henceforth be abolished.*

It Means. An end to the massacre of the innocents! Friends on the eve of war, friends again when war is over, the peoples have for long enough slaughtered each other "for duty's sake" at the word of command. After the horror, after the stupidity of the world butchery of 1914-1918, humanity demands that war shall be erased from its laws and from its customs. To the millions who died we swore that they were dying "to end war." Now, ten years after, it is time to keep our word!

It Means. We, the Government of France, we, the Government of Germany, we, the British Government, etc., etc.—we *henceforth forbid war.* We swear to our people that henceforth we will not make war on any pretext. We declare that we will maintain peace by all and every means. We admit that we owe to our people the maintenance of peace, as we owe to them the maintenance of their roads, their law-courts, their schools and their hospitals. As the People pay us to maintain roads in the country and not to make swamps so they pay us to maintain peace and not to make war. *Peace above all!* On every occasion, on every temptation to use war our first duty *is to say NO!*

It Means. We, your Government, recognize that the first right of every citizen of a civilized country is the right no longer to be obliged periodically to kill his neighbor, his comrade across the frontier, nor to be killed by him. The first right of man is that he shall no longer be fodder for the machine-gun and poison gas, as he has long ceased to be the victim of the lash and of the Bastille. *The first of the rights of man is the right to live at peace.* This right we hereby proclaim and the other Governments proclaim it with us.

People of France!

That is what your Government has just proclaimed to you officially (whether sincerely or not matters little). If YOU wish it the solemn vow of the August 27, 1928, can be your salvation and the salvation of your children. Understand it! Remember it, despite the cynicism, the silence and lies of the Press.

But to obtain the fulfilment of this vow you must count on yourselves alone!

It is not from the Governments, it is from the Peoples, from the great people of the United States of America that the idea of the outlawry of war has sprung. They it is who have swept their Government on to do this thing; and after hesitation our Government has been obliged to follow. The Governments have signed but already they are muttering that they reserve their so-called "wars of defence." (And when the moment comes they call all wars by this name!) They have signed, but already they are saying that "for prudence sake" they must go on with their ruinous and monstrous competition in armaments!

People It Is Your Turn.

You alone are the guardians of the treaty of the 27th August, without you it will be no more than one more scrap of paper. But if you open your eyes, if you seize the incomparable opportunity which is offered to you, then you are master of Peace amongst men. For you have only to take the Governments at their word.

They Have Signed the Death Warrant of War. Oblige Them to Carry Out the Sentence. Remember always yourselves and remind them constantly of:

Their Admissions: Their Contracts. and of the New Rights Given to You by This New Charter of Peace.

1. *What Are Their Admissions?*

That with good will *war can always be avoided.*

By Article 2 of the Treaty the Governments avow that every conflict "of whatever nature or of whatever origin it may be" can and must be settled "by pacific means." Then never let them say again to you "We are forced into war." There can be no war, as there can be no duel, except when the two opponents desire it. Remember always this confession, *War Is Never Inevitable!*

2. *What Are Their Contracts?*

I. The prohibition of war. They have declared that whatever the end in view may be, war is a criminal method of trying to obtain it. Article I of the Treaty reads that we will henceforth never employ war "as an instrument of national interest (commerce, etc.) nor of extension of sovereignty (colonies, etc.) nor even of national prestige, shall be any excuse for war."

II. The prohibition of preparation for war. But if it is a crime to undertake war it is also a crime to prepare it and to prepare the peoples for it. We must then outlaw all fomentation of the peoples for war, all exciting to hatred of their neighbors, and above all *we must outlaw armaments.*

In vain can our rulers protest to us that they are arming only for our defense! For defense there are other means less atrocious than mutual murder. And in the event, ever becoming more and more improbable, of a Government breaking its peace vow and being followed by its people, then organize against such an eventuality the

*This is a translation of a poster prepared by the Outlawry of War Committee for distribution throughout France. Seventy thousand copies have been printed, and will go to every head teacher in French schools, with request that they be posted on the walls of the schools where all may see and read.—Ed.

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publican hypocrisy you should as a liberal and dry reconsider your position and come out for Smith.

CARL C. BAKER.

Macedon Center, N. Y.

Government Ownership

Editor of UNITY:

UNITY is to be be commended for giving a hearing to all parties in the campaign. The average individual, who of course is a partisan, will hardly take the trouble to acquaint himself with different points of view on a controverted question unless the opportunity is literally thrust upon him in some such way as UNITY has provided.

Mr. Hoover in his Elizabethton speech expressed his opposition to government operation of industrial plants in competition with its citizens, and he made it clear later that he had in mind Muscle Shoals and other power projects. At New York he stressed other well-known objections to government ownership.

Had Mr. Hoover been president at the time the parcel post bill was passed by Congress he could not consistently have done otherwise than veto the bill on the ground that the government should not carry parcels in competition with private companies. The purpose of the parcel post act was of course to loose the strangle hold of four giant express companies on that line of carrying trade. It accomplished its purpose and has met with general approval.

The electric power trust at the present time is threatening to wield a far wider monopolistic power throughout the country than did the closely associated express companies of a generation ago. Mr. Hoover has finally made it clear that he believes in controlling this and other monopolistic industries by government regulation. As he has also pledged himself to follow the policies of President Coolidge, one is tempted to say that if Mr. Hoover is elected we may expect to see him employ the same drastic regulative measures against the power trust that the present administration has used against the aluminum trust. Any serious attempt to regulate the power trust would almost certainly involve the expenditure of millions in money and years of time to fix a valuation on the power plants as a basis for rate making, and such varied influences would be brought to bear that the resulting rates might be anything but fair.

Potential or actual competition by government-owned plants seems to me the one effective means of curbing monopoly. What is there wrong in the government's producing electric power and selling it to citizens as cheaply as may be? or at least in demonstrating that electric power can be produced far more cheaply than the power trust is willing to admit?

Denver, Colo. F. S. KINDER.

terrible threat of blockade, i. e., the rupture of all commercial and financial relations. But to arm is to attract war and war is outlawed. DISARM.

3. *The New Rights of the Peoples.*

Since war is now a crime it follows that henceforth the citizen who would follow his Government into war will be a criminal and too a criminal he who will allow the preparation of war. Citizen! it is henceforward not merely your right but your legal duty to refuse all participation in warlike enterprises, and above all to tolerate no more in speeches, in the press, in the schools nor in any public act anything which may provoke, exalt or prepare the crime of war officially declared a crime by the Treaty of August 27, 1928.

Peoples! It is you who should and who will make real the Outlawry of War signed by your Governments. The law is now against war. Let the law be respected.

OBSOLETE WAR MEMORIALS

War memorials are falling into disrepute all over England. Recently the Parks Committee of Manchester recommended to the Corporation that all tanks, guns and other relics should be scrapped. These relics were supplied to practically every principal town shortly after the war, when the municipalities were eager to possess them, and were placed in parks and prominent public places. They are becoming more and more unpopular. The London *Observer* reports that in one town "the Labour element contended that these relics were an irritating reminder of the horrors of war, and every occasional repainting drew forth expressions of indignation that so much good colour should be wasted on such rubbish. In the end the tank in question was dismantled before an admiring crowd, and the two 18-pounder guns marched off to a local park, where they might mourn their better days beside some veterans from Sevastopol." Another town sold its guns for two pounds. In another case it was decided to destroy four big German guns, not only because they "did more to foster war than peace," but because they were adjacent to places of public worship. In still another instance, ex-Service members of the Council obtained a reprieve for the local tank on the ground that it was a reminder of the ugliness as well as the glory of war. At Birmingham a whole museum of shells, machine guns, bayonets, gas masks, helmets and the like was locked up indefinitely in a back room of the art gallery.

The *Observer* gives an account of an American colonel who "some time ago journeyed specially to Germany to return to as many owners and relatives as he could trace his collection of 500 German relics of every kind which he made in France and Belgium during the war. 'I know if my son were killed in the war,' he explained, 'I should be glad to have anything that had belonged to him.'"

Rabbi—Lord

It is my joy that you should be
Storm clouds flailing me.

It is my pride that I should find
Swift lightning in your mind.

For so you strike, through murky air,
Straight to the thing I dreamed,
And hold me, tortured by the flash,
Stripped naked, but redeemed.

SARAH JOSSELYN WILSON.

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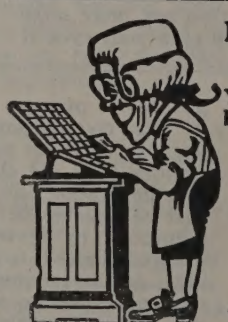
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